Technical Writing

English 235 Section HYC (1267)
Spring Quarter 2010
12:30-1:20 M/W
Room D 274 A

Instructor: Sydney C. Dietrich
Office: Room R 230, Office O
Office Hours: 2:00-3:00 M/W
......and by appointment
Phone: 564-2109 (office, voice mail)
564-2341 (A & H Office)
Email: sydney.dietrich@bellevuecollege.edu
Fax: 564-2690
Mailbox: Arts & Humanities, R 230


Course Description

This section of English 235 is a hybrid class which meets twice a week on campus and provides the remainder of your class work online in a Blackboard/Vista online course site. In a hybrid class, two hours a week are spent on campus and the remaining three hours a week, that are required for a five-credit course, are spent working online on the course site.

Regular attendance in both “classrooms” is required. You will access your assignments and supporting materials on the online course site. You will be discussing course topics with the other students in class in the online Discussion Board, taking quizzes online, and posting your completed work to the course site. You may email me through the course site email or my campus address, sydney.dietrich@bellevuecollege.edu.

English 235 is considered an “exit” course, intended for students who are within thirty (30) credits of graduating; according to the BC Course Catalog, degree programs that require the course for graduation define it as a second year option. It is an introductory course in technical writing for students in BC’s professional/technical programs and those who will enter technical careers after completing their four-year degrees. As a 200-level course, it is demanding in the amount of work and time required to complete it.

It is advisable that students enrolling in English 235 have completed at least three quarters of work at BC (or equivalent) and have strong college-level reading and writing skills:

- Those who choose to take English 235 during their first year of college study rather than their second may risk receiving grades below those of second-year students.
- Students who have an assessed reading proficiency below college level (English 106 at BC) should take English 235 only when they have the necessary reading skills to understand the textbook and other course materials.

Course Focus

The aim of this course is to show you how to report technical information **clearly, accurately, and persuasively**.

Technical writing shares many of the same concerns of other kinds of writing, such as attention to Purpose, Audience, and Readability. It is characterized by:

1. a **practical**, no-nonsense **approach** to the writing process
2. the **forms** through which it is conveyed (e.g., **memos,** **instructions,** **proposals,** informal and formal **reports**)
3. its **arrangement** and division for **selective reading**
4. its use of **typographical page design elements**
5. its **use of graphics** to convey information visually
This course will cover the four components of good technical writing: problem-solving/analysis, report design, informational content, and technical communication skills [written, visual, and spoken].

We will base our work in class on the eight measures of good technical writing:

- Honesty
- Clarity
- Accuracy
- Comprehensiveness
- Accessibility
- Conciseness
- Professional Appearance
- Correctness

### Anticipated Course Outcomes

At completion of the course, each student should be able to:

1. Understand the purpose and process of communication in business and industry.
2. Recognize and be able to analyze effective and ineffective technical communication.
3. Understand and execute the written, visual, and verbal processes of technical communication.
4. Communicate technical information in a complete, accurate, and honest form.
5. Prepare various types of technical documents [memo, instructions, proposal, progress report, data report, feasibility report] that are appropriate and effective for various audiences.
7. Use clear, focused, specific, and grammatically correct language in technical documents.
8. Use effective strategies for collaborative work in group projects and preparation of documents.
9. Communicate technical information clearly and effectively in all class discussions, group work, and course assignments.

### Requirements

Your course work will include:

- Assigned textbook reading (often covering 2 or more chapters a week)
- Weekly Discussions on course site
- Reading Quizzes on the course site
- A research project requiring technical data collection and analysis
- Six (6) written reports in several technical formats
- Group work on Report 2 (a set of instructions)
- Group Presentation of Instructions

You will be writing the following 6 technical reports:

1. Memo
2. Instructions
3. Project Proposal
4. Project Progress Report
5. Project Data Report
6. Final Project Report
**Reading and Discussion:**

You should have all assigned reading completed each week. Course discussions ask you to apply the *technical communication* (TC) principles you are learning, so be prepared to participate by understanding the information covered in the assigned reading.

Through discussion, we will discover the reasons for various technical writing strategies and their practical applications. Learning the principles explained in the assigned reading will be essential to all of your work in this class.

**Research Projects:**

Reports 3-6 are generated from a *feasibility study* that each of you will design, research, develop, and report on during the course.

You will be given complete instructions and topic choices for your project in the second week of the quarter. You will be asked to define a *specific topic, purpose, and reader* for your project during the fourth week of class.

**Grading:**

Success in this course depends on your *regular participation* in the class, both on campus and on the Bbd/Vista course site. *All assignments must be completed* in order to pass the course. Full participation is fundamental to acquiring the skills you will need to draft your technical reports correctly.

Your course grade is calculated in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes &amp; Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 1: Memo</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 2: Instructions</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 3: Project Proposal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 4: Progress Report</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 5: Project Data Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report 6: Final Project Report</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades on reports and discussion board are calculated using a *100-point scale*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>98-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>81-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>70-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All reports should be edited and presented in the format assigned for each document. *Single spacing between lines and double spacing between paragraphs* is the norm in technical writing.

You may send me all reports as *Word* attachments to email on the course site. Please do *not* send reports in PDF format, as I cannot insert comments and grades on these documents.

⇒ Please note: I will try to return your graded reports as quickly as possible, but it may take me *up to a week* to grade a set of reports. Please email me directly if you have questions about the grades on your assignments.
Due Dates:

All assignments are due on the dates listed in the course schedule:

- Reports sent electronically must reach me by midnight on the due date. (Please attach them as Word documents to my course email or to sydney.dietrich@bellevuecollege.edu)

There are four exceptions:

- You may take an “extra day” to complete reports 3-6 only by arranging it with me on or before the due dates.

**Late reports** must be turned in no more than **one day after the original due date**, by midnight in electronic form as an attachment to email.

Any report turned in more than one day late will be dropped one grade level each additional day it is late.

Assignments turned in late because of illness must be cleared with me before submission.

Revisions:

You may **revise** Report 3, the **Project Proposal**, for a better grade. The revised grade will be the **original** grade **averaged with the revision** grade. Proposal revisions should be submitted **one week** after your report has been returned to you. Revisions must show substantial work and improvement to earn a higher grade. Please remember to resubmit your original graded draft with your revision.

Attendance

Attendance is required in this class. I grade only those assignments from students who attend class regularly both on campus and online. English 235 is fairly demanding in the time it requires of you for reading, research, and writing; the bulk of your work will be done from midterm to the end of the quarter.

Some students in the past have reported that it is difficult to complete the course when taking other time-intensive classes, so plan your schedule accordingly. If you organize your time early in the quarter and don’t delay the start of your research, you should do fine in the class.

Regular attendance in English 235 is important because:

1) The schedule may change to accommodate problems or questions raised in class.
2) I make announcements in class about adjustments to the schedule or to assignments
3) The work we do during class meetings cannot be made up.

If you are absent for medical reasons or emergencies, please let me know via voice mail or email as soon as you can. If you know you will have to miss class(es) in the future, let me know so that I can make a note of it for the date(s) in question.

Students who routinely arrive late for class or who leave early are considered absent from class. Students who come to class unprepared for class discussions, group work, or who disrupt the class in any way will be marked absent.

A student who misses 20% of the class meetings (5 or more absences) will fail the course.
Please note: you fail this course if you.......

1. Do not submit all assigned reports and exercises by the due dates, or
2. Have 5 or more unexcused class absences

⇒ ⇒ In both situations, you may avoid receiving an “F” for the course by withdrawing on or before Friday, May 21st (in person, by 5:00 p.m.), or by Sun., May 23rd (via the Web, by noon). These are the last dates by which you may receive a “W” for the course.

Unexcused absences affect your participation grade in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is an excerpt from the "Attendance" section in the Arts & Humanities Division Student Procedures and Expectations. My course attendance policy reflects the attendance requirements of the Arts & Humanities Division. You may access the complete policy on the BC Arts & Humanities Division web site.

"In order for students to be eligible for a grade in a course, they must not miss more than [5] classes, or 20% of the total class time scheduled, for any reason. When absences go beyond ten, instructors may a) give a grade of "F" for the course, or b) lower the final grade as much as they see fit. This does not imply that you may be absent fewer than [5] times or 20% without seeing an effect on your grade; indeed, we wish to emphasize that any absence undermines your progress and will result in your having to work harder to catch up. [Five] absences or 20% is merely the figure beyond which you cannot go without risking your eligibility for a course grade. In cases of legitimate hardship, students may also request that instructors grant a "HW" (hardship withdrawal), which is a non-credit grade.

In summary, when you are absent from a class more than [5] times or 20% in any given quarter, you may receive a failing grade. Whatever written policy an instructor has in the syllabus will be upheld by the Arts and Humanities Division in any grievance process."

Use of the English 235 course site another important aspect of your course attendance: Two hours a week are spent in class and the remaining 3 hours a week are spent working on the online course site.

Saving and Sending Your Work Through Email

Be sure to save your English 235 work from your hard drive to some other medium as backup. Keep your rough drafts until your report is returned to you after grading. All graded reports should be saved until the end of the quarter as proof of work completed. This will protect you from having to rewrite a report that is destroyed or lost.

As verification of your work, save your research notes and sources for the Final Project Report in duplicate as your work progresses. Don’t risk loss of your project from a computer crash or loss of a USB drive.

You are responsible for verifying that I have received your assignments sent through email. It’s a good idea to use the "read receipt" function in your email program each time you send me an assignment. Simply request that a confirmation be sent to you when I read your email. This is an automatic confirmation of receipt of your email that helps me if I fail to respond to your email. When in doubt, please check with me to verify that I have received your assignments.
Please Note: Re-using reports from former students in my classes is considered plagiarism of the worst kind. Plagiarized assignments will receive a failing grade and the plagiarism will be reported to the Associate Dean of Student Services.

The ethical considerations of cheating in technical writing are much greater than in other kinds of writing. Since you will use technical writing in the workplace, it is mandatory that you communicate all technical information accurately, completely, and honestly. Most professional organizations, including the Society for Technical Communication, have clearly defined codes of ethical behavior (see Chap. 2 and the IEEE Code of Ethics on p. 34, Technical Communication).

The BC Student Code is also very clear about the seriousness of cheating and disrupting the classroom learning environment:

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.”

Important Links:

Bellevue College E-mail, Bbd/Vista, and access to MyBC

All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to MyBC. To create your account, go to: https://bellevuecollege.edu/sam

You may login to our online course site at: http://vista.bellevuecollege.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the Computing Services website.

The Writing Lab

The Bellevue Community College Writing Lab gives students a free place to go for revision of any writing project, including class assignments, college applications, resumes, and personal projects. During 25-minute sessions, tutors in the Writing Lab help students individually by identifying weaknesses in a student’s writing and explaining how to overcome them. However, students meet with a tutor on duty; we will not make appointments for students to work with specific tutors. Also, students may only have one tutoring session per day. Students who want to work on their own may take any of the Writing Lab’s free reference handouts or may use English handbooks in the Writing Lab.

http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/LAB.htm

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible.
If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc

---

**Public Safety**

The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department’s well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: [http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/](http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/)